BAY AREA ATARI* USERS GROUP
NEWSLETTER

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SOFTWARE REVIEW

The latest addition to my software library is the new Atari Word Processor Program, to be used with my new Centronics 739 printer, when it arrives. (The latter is available from "Softside Selections" for $619.88 plus $6.50 postage and handling.)

This is a very fine program from Atari. It is a powerful menu driven program which is really easy to operate. You have to change your habits a little, from using a regular typewriter, as you don't enter a carriage return at the end of each line, the way one does with a typewriter. The <CR> is used to mark the end of a paragraph.

When you are typing the word processor automatically wraps around to the next line and then you format the text by setting the margins, line spacing, paragraph indentation, page length, etc., before you print it out. It lets you center lines, move blocks of text whithin a page and from page to page, delete words, lines, and blocks of text.

The system is a window system, i.e. it looks at the text (up to 132 characters/line) thru' a 40 character wide window. You can see the format of the page that you are handling by pushing the SELECT control on the Atari keyboard. This gives you a graphics display of your text with the margins indicated by large white brackets and the margin settings, tabs, indents, line spacing, etc. listed on the bottom of the screen.

The Word Processor program supports 10 and 16.8 characters per inch, as well as proportional spacing and elongated characters. It also allows underlining if your printer supports this function.

All in all this is a very versatile program. We recently obtained a large word processor at work that cost more than 10 times what I have invested in my Atari system with no more capability. If you have a printer and write at all you really should have this program.

Another program, which is included in the developers disk from APX, is a good utility to have when using programs such as the word processor that flog the disk a lot. This is the RPM disk speed checker. It is easy to use. You simply pop off the sticky screw hole covers on the top of your drive and unscrew the four screws that hold on the top. Carefully lift off the top. <<<BE CAREFULL NOT TO DROP ANY JUNK INTO THE DRIVE WHILE THE TOP IS OFF.>>>

The speed adjustment is a large white plastic wheel which has a screwdriver slot in the center of it. The best way to handle it, in my opinion, is to carefully measure the location of the screwslot and drill a hole in the cover to allow access without removing the cover. Then reassemble the drive cover, adjust the speed and then cover the hole you have drilled with a piece of tape to keep dust and stuff out of the drive.

November 2, 1981 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Dave Flory. Dave Johnson of Axlon provided an interesting demonstration of the speed and power of the RAMDISK. One graphic demonstration was a video slide show that was run with loading of the individual images from a disk drive and the RAMDISK. The almost instantaneous loading from the RAMDISK was very impressive. Unfortunately, the RAMDISK is not compatible at the present time with a number of important software packages including Visicalc and BASIC A+. However, some software houses have already indicated to Axlon that RAMDISK compatible versions of their programs will become available.

Thomas Boone of Compumax and Bill Wilkinson demonstrated the MICROTEACH package for courseware generation. The package is written in BASIC A+ and is designed to be used by an instructor is generating programmed learning lessons. The program can also be used to implement computerized user manuals, etc. The program is under going prerelease testing at the present and if it is as powerful and easy to use as Compumax indicates, this package will aid in the penetration of the educational market by Atari.

John Crane announced that APEX will be marketing an implementation of FORTH based on FIG Forth. This will be the second (third ?) implementation of Forth for the Atari to be marketed. Other languages that are available or soon will be available include three versions of BASIC (Atari, Atari Microsoft, and BASIC A+), Pilot, LISP from Datasoft, and Tiny C from OSS. Atari is planning to market Pascal. If FORTRAN and a BASIC compiler are implemented, language availibility will not be a reason to chose another another microcomputer over the Atari.

Robert Kawaratani

Miscellaneous Notes

We are now blessed with three major word processing software packages for the Atari. The Atari word processor is the most sophisticated package and offers a number of features not offered by its two major rivals, Letter Perfect

from LJK and Text Wizard from Datasoft. I hope that reviews of the Atari word processor and Text Wizard appear soon (hint) in this newsletter to complement past coverage of Letter Perfect.

I personally am a Letter Perfect user and probably will not convert to the Atari word processor. One reason for this is the latest version of Letter Perfect (2.1) which I just received from LJK. The major change in this version is that right justification has been implemented for the proportional font of the Atari 825 printer. With this improvement, extremely attractive pages can be printed out. Unless camera ready copy is required, this combination provides adequate print quality for all of my applications. Another changes include making the proportional font the default font, and implementing centering with the proportional font. This coupled with other improvments made earlier including elimination of crashing when non existent or turned off devices were specified indicate the effort that LJK is making to support this product.

The second reason is that LJK has two companion programs which will be coming on the market in the immediate future, a data base management program (Data Perfect) and a utility program. The utility program will allow one to convert Atari DOS files or Visicalc files for use with Data Perfect or Letter Perfect. This opens up a number of exciting possiblities which I will discuss when I review these two new packages in a future issue of this newsletter.

Another product of interest to individuals considering small business applications for their Atari 800 is the numeric keypad that Rennaisance Technology has advertised. The key pad is supplied with software which will make the keypad equivalent to the numeric keys on the Atari keyboard. The major drawback to the keypad at the present time is that it is not compatible with Visicalc. Hopefully Personal Software will be willing to make the changes necessary to implement this feature as it would make data entry more convenient.

Robert Kawaratani

HARDWARE

Initial report on the Versawriter Graphics Tablet for the Atari. A major design fault came to light when the drawing arm swung out when I dropped the unit 6 inches onto the table top and the plastic part of the arm promptly snapped off. I am presently waiting for the glue to dry.....(it dried and the unit works just fine again.)

The software is not what it is advertised in Creative Computing. There is no shape table software for the Atari and the map scaling software is also not present. Unfortunately for me they are why I bought the unit. I feel that this is misleading advertising on the part of Peripherals Plus (NOT VERSA COMPUTING) which is a division of Creative Computing. The add says there are minor differences between the Atari program and the Apple programs. I don't feel two disks full of programs is a minor difference.

I still feel that if they will update the software to the level advertised for the Apple it will be an excellent device for those interested in graphics. It certainly has potential as a simple means of drawing playfields for games without programming the layout. I feel that Versa should definitely eliminate the flimsy plastic arm. I am certainly going to build something stronger onto mine.

CLUB NEWS

As most of you read in the last newsletter, we have lost our editor, Liza Loop. She served well for a long time, and now feels the need to step down.

Some feel that there is no longer any need for a club newsletter and that since there is so much Atari information being published now in the computer magazines, all we need is to let people know when the meetings are, perhaps with a postcard.

I am not sure that I agree with this right now. I know that I got a lot of information out of the newsletter when I was starting with the club. It seems to me that the major value of the newsletter is to new members and potential new members in breaking them in during their first few months of Atari ownership.

Most of the magazine articles seem to assume some experience with computers. Many of our club members are hobbyists who revel in digging into the bytes and bits that make their Atari do tricks, but I feel that the major market for the Atari, and the other micros, is with the non-technical user market. This is the direction that Atari seems to be aimed and I feel that in the end it will benefit those of us who fit the hobbyist/technical group greatly. When micros are being sold by the millions, instead of by the thousands there will be a tremendous market for peripherals and software. This will mean that

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Monday	Robin Ziegler	(408) 438-6879	Graphics
Tuesday	Chris McAfee	(408) 258-8442	Hardware
Wednesday	John Crane	(408) 268-7317	BASIC & Forth
Thursday	Paul Conrad	(408) 226-7676	BASIC
Friday	Skip Inskeep	(408) 251-5517	Forth
Saturday	Bob Burkhalter	(415) 856-1893	Disc I/O
Sunday	Hans Hansen	(415) 490-0175	DOS I & II

Please Restrict your calls to between the hours of 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the day the contact is on duty.

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much more will be available to all of us in using our computers. Every thing that we do to help the non-technical person to feel at home with the microcomputer will eventually benefit us as computer hobbyists.

To this end we have been working on setting up programming classes, ranging from what keys do what, to FORTH and Assembly Language. John Crane has been negotiationg with Atari to see if he can hold FORTH classes in their developement room (40+ ATARI computers and a huge projection screen unit so everyone in the room can see demonstrations). I am still talking to the Cupertino School District and as soon as they have their alarm system in we should be able to start there. ONLINE MICROSYSTEMS at Almaden Fashion Plaza has offered their store for classes also. These should start about the first of 1982.

For those of you who missed the last meeting at Dysan this place is a really beautiful auditorium with good sound characteristics and very comfortable seating. When we manage to arrange a large screen TV for the stage it will be about perfect. We will be meeting here on the first Monday of the month for the forseeable future. Our next mid-month meeting will be at ONLINE MICROSYSTEMS on the west side of Almaden Fashion Plaza. This is at the intersection of Almaden Expressway and Blossom Hill Rd. in San Jose. We plan to move around from shop to shop for the mid-month meetings so call one of our officers if you have any doubt about the location of a mid-month meeting.

SERVICE MOVED

Latest news I have from Atari is that the Computer service area has been moved to a small building off of Carribean Dr. If you are going S. on Carribean you take the first driveway to the right after you pass Borregas. The number is 714 and has the name of another company on the window, but if you look closely you will see an ATARI sign there. Look for all of the Personal Computer Systems group to be moving again, to the area of Montague and North First Street in San Jose, just after the first of the year. Growth, growth, growth, it's not an unmixed blessing.
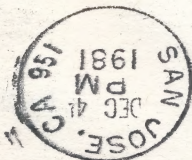
MEETINGS NOTICE

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Bay Area Atari Users Group will be Pearl Harbor Day, December 7th at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be at our new location: Dysan, Inc.; 5201 Patrick Henry Way, Santa Clara.

Our scheduled speakers will be Ihor Wolosenko of Synapse Software, demonstrating his new Filemanager 800 data base management system with some remarks about how neurolinguistic principles were used in the design. Following him will be Paul Cubbage, manager of ATARI Software Acquisition Review. He will present some of the new programs to be found in the next APX catalog.

Our midmonth meeting this month will be on Tuesday, December 15th, at Online Computer Centers in San Jose. It is located at the corner of Almaden and Blossom Hill in the Almaden Plaza. Look for the Nob Hill market as a landmark.

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This is membership renewal time for all who wish to remain on the mailing list. Please fill this form in completely and mail at your earliest opportunity to:

Bay Area Atari Users Group
c/o Foothill College
12345 El Monte Road
Los Altos Hills,
Calif. 94022

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** MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL **

Membership in the Bay Area Atari Users Group entitles you to the monthly newsletter. This includes information on meetings, hints on programming, subroutines, notices of releases for new Atari products, dealer's specials, free classified ads for individuals, and much more! Also, very important, loads of FREE software.

YES, I would like to become a member/renew my membership in the: BAY AREA ATARI USERS GROUP

Make check payable to the:
        "Bay Area Atari Users Group"
Memberships are from January 1 to December 31. Dues are $12.00 per year. Please send in early to keep your news-letters coming without interuption.

Name:_____
Address:_____
City, State:_____
Zip Code:_____ Phone: (___)_____
  (Please check whether new or renewing, it will save us time)
NEW____   RENEWING____   ADDRESS CHANGED-yes___ no___
Would you want your name, address, and phone included in the membership roster which will be distributed only to the club members?   ( ) Yes   ( ) No

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